Website Script

**Home**

Songs of colonization is a project that analyzes a select corpus of US-American and German South-West African “folk songs” that highlight collective ideas of nationalism and colonialism at during the late 19th century. After selecting our songs, our team analyzed them using an XML frame work along with other associated technologies in order to produce the data we present on the website.

This was all created during our semester long Computational Methods in Humanities Course at the University of Pittsburgh by Lilly Forrest, Evan Ressel, and Maja Lynn. Our thanks to our professors David Birnbaum, James Pickett, and UTA Mitchell Luckman for all of their guidance.

* Lilly, Evan, Maja

**About**

In this project we seek to explore how nationalism is expressed through the colonial narrative of “folk songs” in the American West and German Southwest Afrika, present day Namibia. Our team analyzed a corpus of texts with the goal of understanding the expression of collective colonial identity in both Germany and the US, and how those contexts may be related. We determined that songs would be particularly effective in communicating the collective ideas of these groups, because they are composed for the “common man”. Soldiers and settlers alike were supposed to identify with these songs, and the songs themselves were meant to solidify and encourage their concepts of national identity.

One of the main goals in analyzing these songs is understanding what these collective ideas are and how that may translate to the justification of violence. In many of the songs, you might notice derogatory, violent, or negative language surrounding the cultures that were native to land being colonized. Genocide is part of the history of colonization in both the US and German South-west Africa. Can songs offer us an insight into the mentality and hatred that supported and encouraged these inhuman acts of violence? Can we see expressions of nationalism that promote an us-vs-them mentality that laid the seeds of racism, xenophobia and eventually acts of genocide? Go to our *historical context* tab to learn more about this, and the relationship between the American West and the German Southwest.

Through our research, we determined that colonization is about the possession of land, resources, bodies, and labor based upon concepts of racial/ethnic superiority that are driven by love of country, unity and the “us vs. them” mentality. After analyzing our texts, we decided to search for five main themes: homeland, violence, national unity, possession, and other significant acts. Within these main categories we evaluated if they were instances of, for example, patriotism or xenophobia. We also made note of whether these statements had positive or negative inflections. Through collecting data based on the metrics we choose to identify expressions of, we hope to identify patterns that make it possible to compare types of nationalism American and German colonizers express.

You can read about this and our analysis under the “results” and “conclusions” pages

\*should I put the page names in italics or quotes?\*

**Historical Context:**

* Americans were colonizing a continuous stretch of land
* Instances of Genocide in North America are inconsistent (not every native group were victims of genocide, and there was not one procedure that all colonizers followed)
* Westward expansion and colonization took place over many centuries in the US
* American songs are folk songs. (look into legends and the origin of these songs)
* The US is founded in 1776, a new nation was formed out of people from “diverse” backgrounds
* Germans were colonizing a country far away, and vastly different from their own
* German nation state was created in 1871, formed by groups of people who had long history of occupying this land. Important to create a new identity that would bring people together and make them take pride in Germany
* Trend to strengthen national unity was to glorify medieval Germany- using stories of nights and Valhalla (think pantheon for norse gods that honors German warriors and nights)
  + Ie The Ring of the Nibelung, an extremely famous four-part opera written by Wagner (15 hours in total) about these Norse myths premiered in 1876
  + Resurgence of ballads, which had been popular in medieval times(ill get a more accurate date, but think like 1200 and 16th century peasant protest songs), expressing nationalism for German
* Germany began colonizing late, because they had not been a state before – formally took over Namibia in 1884 after the European “scramble for Africa”
  + Long before this, they had been idealizing America West
* “nation states” are all about ethnic identity (vs US which is more about white Europeans vs poc)
* Lost all colonial land in 1919 after WW1, after just roughly 40 years as a colonial power
* Both believe it is there right to take land away from native people
* Both want land to demonstrate power, and gain resources
* Both romanticize the landscape of the homeland, and “cowboy motifs” like riding and hunting (this is *not* the focus of our data collection, because it would take to long, but I still think it might be interesting to point these (fairly obvious) themes out in our analysis)

**Texts**

* American Songs

The songs that make up this Corpus were all selected from (\*\*\*where did we find them?). We choose this source because it was easily accessible and was already digitalized. The songs themselves come from a variety of sources (\*\*ask Lilly if she can find out any information on authors and dates, or what books they may have appeared in\*\*). We selected songs whose content dealt directly with either expansion and possession of land or with settlers’ relationships with native peoples. You will notice that this corpus is significantly larger than the German songs, this is due to multiple historical and practical reasons. First, we had a much easier time finding access to American folk songs online. Due to the time and resource restrictions of this project, we embraced this disparity and went forward with a greater amount of American songs. The American period of expansion was also much longer and has been celebrated in popular culture to this day. This accounts for a greater public interest in these songs, which likely contributed to higher rates of publication and circulation.

* German Songs (English)
* German Songs (German)

\*OR\*What format is better?

If we have an “about the corpus” section

Our corpus is limited to songs we found in research written by colonizers specifically about the land that they were colonizing. In the case of the German content, this limited our options because it was difficult to find songs specifically about Southwest Africa. We decided to select a small amount of songs that we were able to find through our university’s library resources in order to more closely analyze this complex theme. We chose to manually mark up our corpus because of the ambiguous nature of the content, which given our time constraints was only possible with a smaller corpus.

**Results**

These results were formulated using …….

They are based on our analysis of these songs based on our research on German and American colonization.

**Conclusions**